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Letter dated 29 November 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you information on measures being undertaken in the Republic of Uzbekistan in the sphere of social development and social protection of the population (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 62.

(*Signed*) Alisher **Vohidov**
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Annex to the letter dated 29 November 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information on measures being undertaken in the Republic of Uzbekistan for social protection of the population

The Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan pays special attention to social development issues, which it regards as a priority area of State policy. As part of its efforts to achieve the goals and targets established during the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Republic of Uzbekistan is taking progressive steps to further improve public services and implement a range of employment promotion measures.

In the process of implementing market reforms, the State's main social goals are primarily to improve the quality of life and the well-being of families and individuals. It should be emphasized that strong social protection of the population is among the core principles of the Uzbek model of reforms. In the purposeful pursuit of its social protection policy, the Government approves and implements State programmes every year. The programmes implemented include, inter alia, the "Year of Human Interests", the "Year of Women", the "Year of the Family", the "Year of the Healthy Generation" and the "Year of the Mother and Child". The proclamation by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of the year 2007 as the "Year of Social Protection" clearly demonstrates the State's constant and extensive attention to social development issues.

In this connection, the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan has approved the State programme entitled the "Year of Social Protection". A range of targeted measures are being implemented under this programme in order to further broaden and strengthen the social protection of the population and improve the targeting, differentiation and effectiveness of the assistance provided to those members of society most in need: the disabled, single aged people, mothers and children. The measures being undertaken are also designed to prevent a sharp polarization in the income levels of the population and consolidate an atmosphere of mutual understanding, kindness and charity in society.

Special attention is being paid to targeted social protection for the most vulnerable sectors of the population. Local self-governing bodies known as *makhalla* traditionally play a central role in providing targeted social protection: it is through these bodies that aid is distributed to the people most in need.

State social support programmes which primarily target mothers and children have become widespread in recent years. Funding for social protection of the population was also significantly increased in the 2007 Uzbek State budget. Whereas total social spending accounted for 51 per cent of the State budget in 2006, in the current year that figure was 54.1 per cent. Expenditure on social benefits for families accounted for 7 per cent of the 2007 State budget. In addition to budgetary expenditure, the Government adopts special regulations every year on targeted

social protection and social services for single aged people, pensioners and the disabled.

Systematic work is being carried out to incorporate social protection issues into the presidential and governmental laws, decrees and decisions adopted by parliament. In 2007, for example, decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan were adopted on measures to further improve and strengthen the social protection system for the population and on measures to strengthen social support for pensioners.

Great importance is attached while carrying out these reforms to promoting employment through new job creation. In the past two years alone, more than one million jobs — 70 per cent in small businesses — have been created under local employment promotion programmes. Mindful that a significant proportion of the Uzbek population is under 18 years of age, the Government has developed and is implementing targeted youth employment programmes.

A programme of specific measures is being implemented pursuant to the decision of the President of the Republic dated 6 April 2007 on measures for the promotion of employment, the strengthening of labour bodies and social protection of the population. This programme introduces new forms of employment, taking into account demographic factors and promising areas for sectoral development and structural reforms of the economy.